

**Robert Dinwiddie to George Washington, November 16, 1756, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.**

**FROM GOVERNOR DINWIDDIE.**

WILLIAMSBURG Novr. 16th: 1756

SIR —

Yr. Letter of the 9th: I recd: with a Report of Yr. Journey along our Frontiers — The Abuses mention'd in Yrs. I have been made acquainted with from several Hands; but I expected You wou'd have been more particular in regard to the Officers neglecting their Duty, & the different Forts not being properly garrison'd with Men — nay witht. their Officers: this vague Report makes it impossible for me to call on the Delinquents — I agree the Militia Law is very deficient, and I hope the next Assembly will make proper Amendments.

The Charges attending the Militia of Augusta is monstrous, & I believe a great Imposition on the Country; I have sent up Money & order'd a strict Scrutiny to be made into each Officer's Acct. & the actual Service done by their Companies—I pity the poor Inhabitants, Majr. Andw. Lewis has my Orders to bring the Militia into better Order.

The establishing of Regulars wou'd be very agreeable to me, but where are the Men to be gotn. when You have not been able in a twelve Mo. to compleat Yr. Regmt—Commissions granted to Rangers upon producing Subscriptions was only to those that went Volunteers witht. Pay, the others were by proper Recomendats.<sup>1</sup>

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I have repeatedly wrote Lord Loudoun the Necessity of an Offensive War, & an Expedition to the Ohio with the Assistance of our neighbouring Colonies, but no Answer, I hope to see him here this Winter.—I am of Opinion the String of Forts propos'd in only weakening our Strength, & will be a poor Defence to our Frontiers—I hope You will keep the Inds. properly employ'd—Majr. Lewis has Orders to send up the Cherokees—You seem to Attribute Neglect in me, in not having proper Conductors, the Charge is unmanerly, as I did what I thot. proper, tho' disappointed by the villanous Traders.<sup>2</sup>—You have a Quantity of Indn. Goods at Fort Cumbl'd for Your distributing among the Indians as You see proper; & Majr. Lewis will send You some Indn. Guns for the Catawbias.

There is no Exception in the Act of Assembly giving Premiums for Scalps—Ct. Spotswood is paid for the one he sent down, the Method of paying them is by Law, and must be adhered to, or can I see much Inconveniency in it.

I cannot propose any means to replace the Drafts I wish You cou'd engage them to list—You know how far short the Officers have been of complying with their Promises when Commission'd—You have a Right to agree with the Workmen employ'd on any Public Works.

If You had sent down the Amo. of the Money due for the Servants enlisted, I wou'd have given a Warrant for the Money—It's probable I might have refus'd Paymt. to the Masters of some of the Servants enlisted, for want of Certificate, but never said You did not act properly in enlistg. them—but surely You cannot think I cou'd order paymt. witht. an Acct. from You.

Mr. Walker when last here determin'd to continue Comissary, with the Assistance of his Depty one Mr. Rutherford, he then had some Money, & Ct. Mercer brings more for that Service—You mention Yr. having made choice of a Person for that Employ, witht. sending his name for my Approbation, if Walker declines, which is irregular, & I cannot consent to

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it;<sup>3</sup>—The same in regard to a Captn. Chaplain, You shou'd know that it's necessary his Qualificat. & the Bishop's Letter of License shou'd be produc'd to the Comissary, & Self, but this Person is also nameless.<sup>4</sup>

I recd. the Opinion of the Council of War in regard to Fort Cumbld; as it was an Affair of great Consequence I call'd the Council for their Advice, & I enclose You my & their Sentiments thereon—In consequence thereof I hereby order You imediately to march one hundred Men to Fort Cumberland, from the forces you have at Winchester, which Capt. Mercer says are 160 listed Men [mutilated] are to remain at Fort Cumberland, & make the Place as strong as You can in Case of an Attack; You are to send out Parties from the Fort not absolutely necessary for its defence, You are to send them to Winchester.

You are to order one of Your subaltern Officers (on whom you can confide) to Command at Winchester, and to oversee the finishing of the Fort building at that Place These Orders I expect You will give due obedience to & I am with Respect<sup>5</sup> —

Sir Your most hble Servant ROBT. DINWIDDIE P. S. I have sent a Copy of the Council of War Proceedings to Lord Loudoun —

1 "The wretched and unhappy situation of the inhabitants needs few words, after a slight reflection on the preceding circumstances, which must certainly draw after them very melancholy consequences without speedy redress. They are truly sensible of their misery; they feel their insecurity from militia preservation, who are slow in coming to their assistance, indifferent about their preservation, unwilling to continue, and regardless of everything but their own ease. ... I promised at their particular request, to address your Honor and the Assembly in their behalf, and that a regular force may be established in lieu of the militia and ranging companies, which are of much less service, and infinitely more cost to the country. Were this done, the whole would be under one direction, and any misbehaviour could never pass with impunity. Whereas the others are soldiers at will, and in fact will go and come when and where they please, without regarding the orders or directions of any. And, indeed, the manner in which some of the ranging captains have obtained their commissions, if I am rightly informed, is by imposture and artifice."—Washington to Dinwiddie, November 9, 1756.

2 "I am very sorry any expression in my letter should be deemed unmannerly. I never intended insults to any; on the contrary, have endeavoured to demean myself in that proper respect due to superiors."—Washington to Dinwiddie, November 24, 1756.

3 "I should not have presumed to have appointed a commissary, had not your first instructions been plain and explicit on this point, and reiterated letters since that invested me with power. The omission of the name was a neglect indeed accidental, not designed."—Washington to Dinwiddie, November 24, 1756.

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4 “When I spoke of a chaplain, it was in answer to yours. I had no person in view, tho' many have offered; and only said, if the country would provide subsistence, we could procure a chaplain, without thinking there was offence in the expression.”—Washington to Dinwiddie, November 44, 1756.

5 Washington bore with patience and fortitude Governor Dinwiddie's impracticable and contradictory orders; but on occasions he strongly remonstrated. In reply to this order, he observed: “So, if I comply with my orders, which I shall literally do, if I can, not a man will be left there to secure the works, or defend the King's stores, which are almost wholly removed to that place.”